

trade agreement is important to many of us. We want to make sure it is included on the floor of the Senate.

Equally so, we want to make sure that trade agreements are enforceable. It wasn't that long ago that we had thriving steel production companies in America that were victimized by many foreign countries that started dumping steel in the United States.

What does it mean to dump steel? These countries—Brazil, Japan, and Russia—were selling steel in the United States at prices lower than the cost of production. Why? They knew they could run the Americans out of business—and they did. By the time we filed an unfair trade grievance, went through the hearings and won our case, the American companies disappeared. Enforcement is an important part of any conversation about trade. We want to know from Senator HATCH and the Republicans who bring this to the floor, if we are going to enforce the trade agreements so Americans are treated fairly.

I think that is a pretty legitimate question. Until it is answered, there is uncertainty. Maybe the vote at 2:30 will reflect it. I hope we can get an answer before 2:30, but if not, then soon after, on how Senator MCCONNELL wants to bring this issue to the floor.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, May 31—today is May 12. On May 31, the Federal highway trust fund authorization expires. What it means is at that point in time, the Federal Government will stop sending Federal dollars back to our States to build highways and bridges and support buses and mass transit—May 31.

What are we going to do about it? We have 19 days to do something about it. Sadly, we know what we are going to do about it. The Republicans who control the House and the Senate have failed to come up with any means of extending the highway trust fund. What they are going to do probably is ask us for a short-term extension—1 month, 2 months.

The reason we think this will happen is that in the past 6 years, there have been 32 extensions of the highway trust fund. We used to pass highway trust fund bills to last 6 years, for obvious reasons. You cannot build highways a month at a time. You have to know you have money that is going to be there for years to build a highway, to repair a bridge, to make certain you have new mass transit modernization. But the Republicans have been unable to reauthorize the highway trust fund for any period of time. They want to extend it 30 days at a time, 60 days at a time.

There are some realities that we need to accept. We cannot patch our way to prosperity in America. You cannot fill enough potholes to build a highway. If we are going to accept our responsibility to be a great nation and a great

leader in the world economy, we need an infrastructure to support it.

The Republican failure to extend the highway trust fund for 5 or 6 years, sadly, is going to cost us jobs in America—not just good-paying construction jobs but jobs in businesses that count on infrastructure. I have them all over Illinois. There are thousands of workers in Illinois who depend on them. But because the Republicans have failed to come up with an extension of the highway trust fund, we are going to limp along here and, sadly, not meet our national obligation to create an infrastructure to support our economy.

I am hoping that cooler heads will prevail and leadership will prevail, and that the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate—they are in the majority in both Chambers—will step forward with a plan to create a highway trust fund for 6 years. The President has; he put it on the table. Republicans rejected it. They have no alternative—none.

Let's get down to business. Let's put America back to work. Let's create the infrastructure we need to build our economy.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democrats have 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to make a statement on Syria and humanitarian concerns in Syria, but it will take longer than that. I know my colleague from Vermont is here, and I would like to yield the remaining 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me say this, if I might. If I can get unanimous consent to speak after Senator THUNE, that would be fine, and I would yield back to the Senator.

How is that?

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator wants to make that unanimous consent request—

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes after Senator THUNE speaks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I believe the previous Presiding Officer suggested I had 5 minutes remaining of Democratic time at this point.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to say, very briefly, a word about the situation in Syria. On May 13, 1994, a Senator from Illinois named Paul Simon was then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa. His ranking Republican was Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont. Senators Jim Jeffords and Paul Simon had been told that there was a looming genocide about to occur in Rwanda. They went on the phone together and spoke to U.N. General Romeo Dallaire in Kigali, Rwanda, in May of 1994. They

asked: What can we do to stop the killing in Rwanda? General Dallaire said: If you would send 5,000 uniformed troops, I could stop this genocide.

Senators Simon and Jeffords wrote to the Clinton White House immediately at that time and asked for the administration to call on the United Nations to act.

Their letter said in part: "Obviously there are risks involved but we cannot continue to sit idly by while this tragedy continues to unfold."

The Senators received no reply from the White House. In less than 8 weeks, 800,000 Rwandans were massacred. Today, President William Clinton acknowledges that he should have done more—we should have done more. What happened in Rwanda was a classic genocide. Today, what is happening in Syria may not meet the classic definition of a genocide, but it certainly meets every standard and every definition as the looming humanitarian crisis of our time. The question before us and the United States is this: What will we do?

I think it has reached the point where we must act. That is why I have joined three of my colleagues—fellow Democrat TIM Kaine of Virginia and Republicans LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina and JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona—and we have written to President Obama, urging him to call together world leaders and to establish a humanitarian zone—a safe zone, a no-fly zone—in Syria, where modern medical treatment can be provided and displaced persons can escape. We think it should be done under the auspices—I do—of the United Nations and that the United States can join other countries in providing a defensive security force.

We need to turn to our NATO allies, such as Turkey. We need to reach out to Saudi Arabia, even Iran, and try to find an international consensus to spare the suffering and death which has been occurring now for years. We do not know the exact number of casualties. We estimate that some 400,000 may have died in Syria. Millions have been displaced.

This is a picture of just one of the refugee camps to which the people of Syria have fled. I have visited camps such as this in Turkey. They are in Lebanon and Jordan. They cannot accommodate all of the people who are evacuating that country.

Once every few months a friend of mine comes to visit in Chicago. He is an extraordinary man. His name is Dr. Sahloul. He heads up a group of Syrian Americans who travel to Syria on a regular basis. They have to sneak into the country—this war-torn country. As doctors, they are providing basic medical care to the victims of the violence that is taking place in Syria.

Dr. Sahloul brings heartbreaking photographs to show me. The last photographs were of children who had been victims of barrel bombs, which Bashar al-Assad, the leader of Syria, drops on